Indo-US Plan for Airstaff Exchange

2117. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the titled news "India, U.S. plan airstaff exchange" published in the Hindustan Times (Delhi Edition) on 5th September, 2002; and

(b) in what way this will help India's defence system?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Exchange programmes with other countries including the US, are part of an ongoing process, Such programmes help develop greater understanding of one another, expose IAF to latest technology and promote interoperability.

Auxiliary System of MIG-21

2118. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a top Air Force Official has apprehended that Auxiliary system of MIG-21 engine was suspect and could be the cause of crashes on 9th September, 2002;

(b) if so, whether these aircrafts were fitted with new engines or they were old engine aircrafts; and

(c) what steps are being taken to ensure safety of aircrafts and pilots?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) There were two category-I accidents of MiG-21 aircraft on 9th September, 2002. These accidents are in the process of investigation by Courts of Inquiry. The findings of the COIs would alone reveal the causes of these accidents.

(b) Both the new and overhauled engines have usable life. The aircraft involved in crashes on 9.9.2002 were fitted with serviceable engines.

(c) A continuous and multi-faceted effort is always a foot in Indian Air Force to enhance and upgrade flight safety. Measures to enhance the quality of training to improve the skill levels, ability to exercise sound